



## Letters to the Editor.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

### EDUCATIONAL LECTURES.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—As a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association, I cannot but regret that your suggestion that our Society should be the preliminary teaching body for our own profession has been so lightly relinquished by the Council, and it is much to be regretted that our present managers failed to grasp the significance of this branch of the work at its true value, and have thus, so to speak, handed over the performance of their duty to the National Health Society—the latter body is an excellent society with definite aims, all for the well-being of the people generally—but the preliminary education of the Nursing profession lies quite outside its power or capacity, and one cannot but regret that it should, with such unseemly haste have snapped up work which ought to be, and only can be satisfactorily carried out by a professional body. I have little doubt that if the Royal British Nurses' Association refuses to carry out the necessary schemes for the benefit of Nurses generally, the Nurses will find means to help themselves. What could be more encouraging than the organization of this new Central Nursing School in Dublin? I am glad to observe that the Matrons' Council are going to consider the matter in October, and I sincerely hope that their sense of public duty will evolve a satisfactory solution to the difficulty.

Yours truly,  
ESPRIT-DE-CORPS.

### A MATRON'S RESPONSIBILITY.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

MADAM,—How true are the sympathetic remarks in the "Echoes" of last week concerning the increased work and responsibility of our hospital Matrons, and how little sometimes do those with, and for, whom she works understand the great strain she daily undergoes in the attempt to carry out her duty. In our large and well organised training schools, working in co-operation with an appreciative medical staff and lay committee, and superintending a class of well educated women, with whom she is on terms of intelligent intercourse, the work of the Superintendent of Nursing is sufficiently severe, but how accentuated the daily burden of work becomes, when one and all of these encouraging elements are absent. I have past experiences as the Matron of a large county Infirmary, which it would be almost impossible to detail, with any expectation that my trials, difficulties, and misery would be believed or commiserated. One is so apt to hear the slighting criticism of one less tried, "Well! she must have lacked tact," or "There is always a way of effecting reform with patience," or "It is a woman's own fault if she cannot manage men." Tut, tut! we know these old arguments, and doubtless they have their grain of truth, but the fact remains that in many institutions where economy is of the first importance, the work of a trained Matron is often for years a martyrdom if it is not much sooner a failure. Granted she has graduated in a well organised Nursing School, and has gained her appointment owing to her good qualifications, how bitter is often the awakening in the unsympathetic sphere of a

hospital where good Nursing is the last luxury which is considered necessary for the sick; and by good Nursing I mean a sufficient staff of well educated Nurses for day and night duty, who perform their duties under the critical eye of a keen Superintendent, where a sufficiency of washing is not esteemed extravagance, where the food is of really good quality and with other domestic necessities is not yearly contracted for, at the very lowest price tendered; where the Matron is the responsible and trusted official in her own department, and the reports of whose department does not filter through to the Committee, by report of a fellow officer; where her personal interest in the comfort of the patients in the wards, is not looked upon by the visiting staff as interference, and in fact where her honourable position is not reduced to that of the Israelites of old, where her task masters demand the making of bricks without straw. Some of your readers must also have suffered this weariness of the flesh, and will with me much appreciate an "Echo" estimating at its true worth the responsibility with which every hospital Matron is endowed, and the necessity that her colleagues should estimate the strain of her daily work at its true value, and by kindly co-operation help to lighten the burden.

Yours, &c.,  
"A COUNTRY MATRON."

### SKIMMED MILK.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

MADAM,—“A Self-respecting Nurse” writes in your last issue, that from personal knowledge the patients' milk is sometimes skimmed by Nurses and wardmaids in our Hospitals to provide cream for the Sisters' tea. She may have been sufficiently unfortunate to work under a Sister who would encourage such a reprehensible proceeding; but one can hardly believe in these days that the educated Sisters of our Hospital wards would permit her subordinates to be guilty of this petty theft—such a proceeding on her part would be entirely subversive of discipline. I remember well one Sister, under whom I had the benefit to receive the greater part of my training, being exceedingly particular on this point, and it was her invariable custom to prevent the milk creaming by stirring it several times in the day with the sterilizing rod, so that each patient should have milk of equal quality.

Yours,  
G.E.S.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad “A Self-respecting Nurse” has touched on the Skimmed Milk question. I regret to say that I also have seen with surprise the milk skimmed for the Nurses' tea, and I have a lively recollection of the snub-direct which I received from my “Staff,” when as a “Pro.” I refused to partake of this illicit luxury. The tea milk was regularly skimmed daily in the majority of wards in the Hospital in which I was trained—sometimes with, sometimes without, the Sisters' knowledge. The custom is a nasty petty larceny, which should not be tolerated for a moment, and is a remnant of the barbarous times in which the Sisters of our Hospitals received an inclusive salary and no board, and when bread, milk, eggs, lemons, mineral waters, cocoa, &c., were freely used by them and their Nurses from the daily Hospital stores. No one need flare up and deny the truth of these statements because I have seen it done. It was a bad result of a bad system of management, and the sooner all our large Hospitals provide liberal board for their Nursing staffs the better, in which, however, the item cream could not justifiably be included.

Yours faithfully,  
"AN EYE WITNESS."

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